

Giving Insight Questionnaire Results Hereford Deanery Synod, October 2011

1. Introduction

Deanery synod members were sent a copy of the Giving Insight questionnaire along with their agenda papers for the September synod and invited to complete these and return them at the synod meeting. There were 30 returns from a possible 56 members (54%), not all completed in full, in part probably because the questionnaire was e-mailed to a proportion of synod as picture attachments and some members obviously had difficulty in downloading these. Although the questionnaire was anonymous and not traceable to the individual there were the occasional concerns about confidentiality and some questions were not answered. Nevertheless it is considered that the analysis performed by the Synod Stewardship Coordinator is reasonably meaningful and representative of synod views. The analysis has been presented in chart form and is appended to this report. There follows a commentary on the results which does contain observations and interpretation by the Coordinator which are meant to be helpful and non-judgemental.

The Coordinator would also like to thank members for their understanding and participation in this exercise and would welcome comment.

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2. Commentary

2.1 The charts are not discussed in numerical order but rather in groups relevant to the issues.

2.2 Questions Q13, 14 and 15. Q13 indicates that 75% of respondents are over 66 and this includes some 17% who are over 75, therefore almost certainly all pensioners. Some 21% of respondents (Q14) felt they were not financially self-sufficient. Is this possibly due to fixed and devaluing pensions? 37% indicated (Q15) that they have financial dependents.

2.2 Questions Q1, 2 and 3 further describe the group as committed to their local church long term, being very regular worshipers and leaders in church life.

2.3 Questions Q11a & Q11b relate to individual perceptions. Q11a suggests members believe themselves to be committed to their church, have a reasonable understanding of how its money is spent, believe their church not to be 'well off' financially, feel they do their 'bit' for the church and are roughly equally divided as to whether they need to do more. Q11b suggests there may be a little guilt in giving levels (there shouldn't be!) and 40% neither agree nor disagree with the premise that they are generous givers. There does not appear to be much enthusiasm for more teaching on giving and the Christian view of money. The financial need of the church does not appear to be the prime determination of the level of giving to the church.

2.4 Questions Q4, 5, 6 and 12 give an insight into giving and relationship to income.

Some 90% (Q4) are committed to standing order or regular envelope scheme. Some respondents use more than one method. 85% (Q6) are able to Gift Aid their donation. It is very that the remainder cannot Gift Aid because they do not pay income tax. These

figures suggest that in the parishes of the respondents 'conventional' stewardship is practiced.

2.5 Question Q5 has not been well conceived. For a meaningful analysis the giving ranges need to be smaller and there should be more 'equivalence' between the monthly and weekly ranges. The statistics below are based upon 18 monthly donors and 11 weekly ones.

33% of monthly donors give between £51 and £80 and another 28% give £21 to £50. 15% give more than £121.

66% of weekly donors contribute £4 to £8 and 22% above £12.

It is interesting to note that there are 'gaps', £81-120 in monthly donations and £8-12 in the weekly ones. If members would like a target for their next parish renewal then it may be to populate the 'gaps'.

In 2009 the average weekly tax efficient planned giving in the Hereford diocese was £5.90 per week in comparison with the average of all dioceses which was £10.06⁽¹⁾. A number of respondents pointed out that financial giving through a stewardship scheme is not the totality of giving. Giving for special causes, fundraising, fetes and the use of time were exemplified to name a few. Such gifts and talents are essential in all largely voluntary organisations, indeed they would not be able to function otherwise, but is it not reasonable to suggest they be 'offered' in a spirit of 'as well as' rather than 'instead of'?

2.6 Question Q12 also has its difficulties in the way it is posed. Is the household income a result of one, two or more incomes - and has the donor complete discretion or mutual agreement as to its disposal? The chart shows that 56% of donors have access to £20,000 or more income. A donor with £20,000 at their discretionary disposal, pledging at a level of 5%, would give just over £19 per week.

2.7 Questions Q 7, 8, 9 and 10 give some insight as to how we work through our giving to the church and charity. Taking Q10 first, 41% think a 5% target/challenge is acceptable but a majority of 61% say no or not sure. Following on from this Q8, 72% do not work out their giving in proportion to their income. As a result of this there were only 17 responses to Q7 that indicated the local church received an average of 58% of the donors' total charity giving. Q9 was even more sparsely answered with only 8 replies. These responders indicated that their average total giving was 5%, ranging from 3% to 10%.

3. Final Observations

3.1 From the 30 returns it would appear that an elderly synod is largely committed to 'traditional stewardship' and Gift Aid as well as many other aspects of church life.

3.2 From other sources⁽¹⁾ it is evident that general levels of financial giving within the Hereford diocese are low compared with other dioceses.

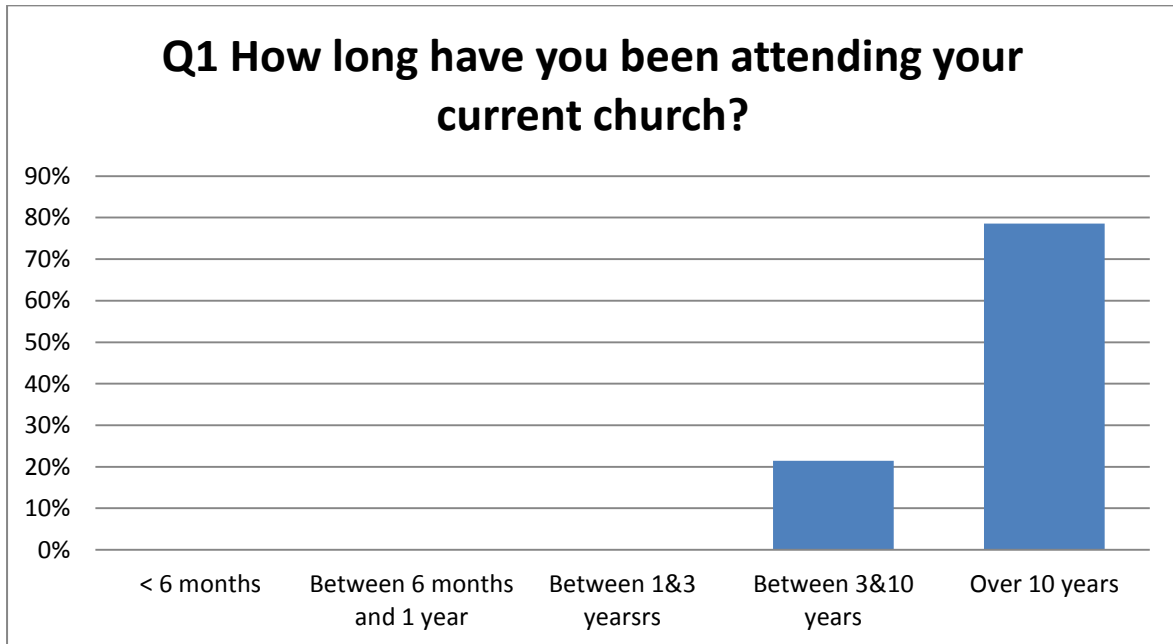
3.3 There is some hesitation in using the concept of determining a level of giving in terms of a percentage of income. However in an organisation where all contributions are voluntary it is desirable to have some realistic target and the percentage target seems to be a useful one that can be used as a measure when determining a personal or joint commitment.

(1) Statistics published 2011 by Archbishops' Council, Research and Statistics.

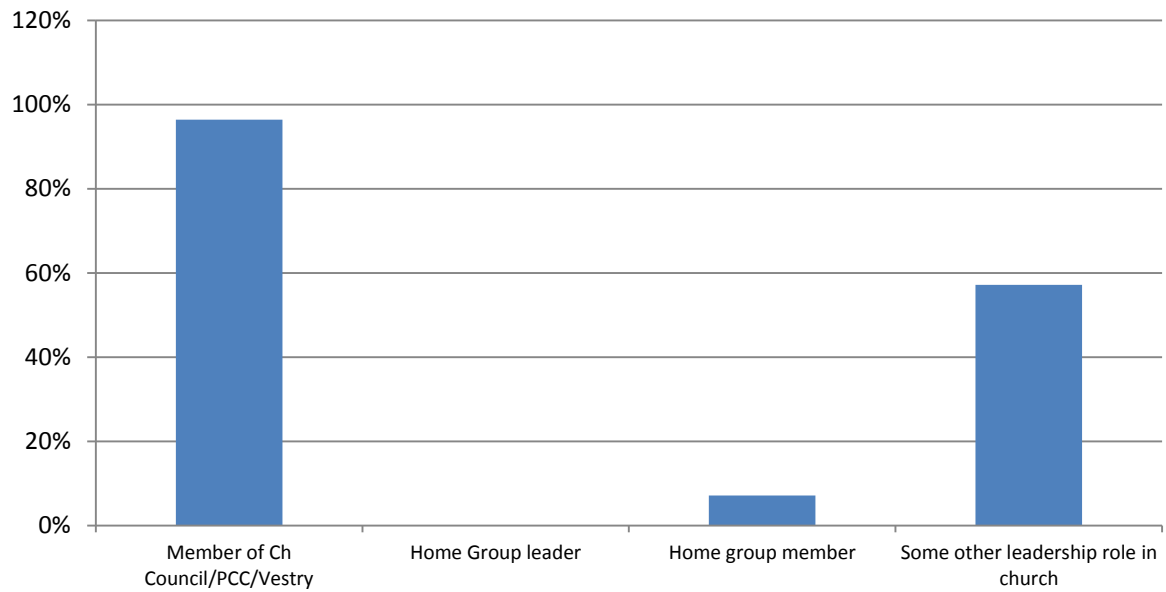
Analysis

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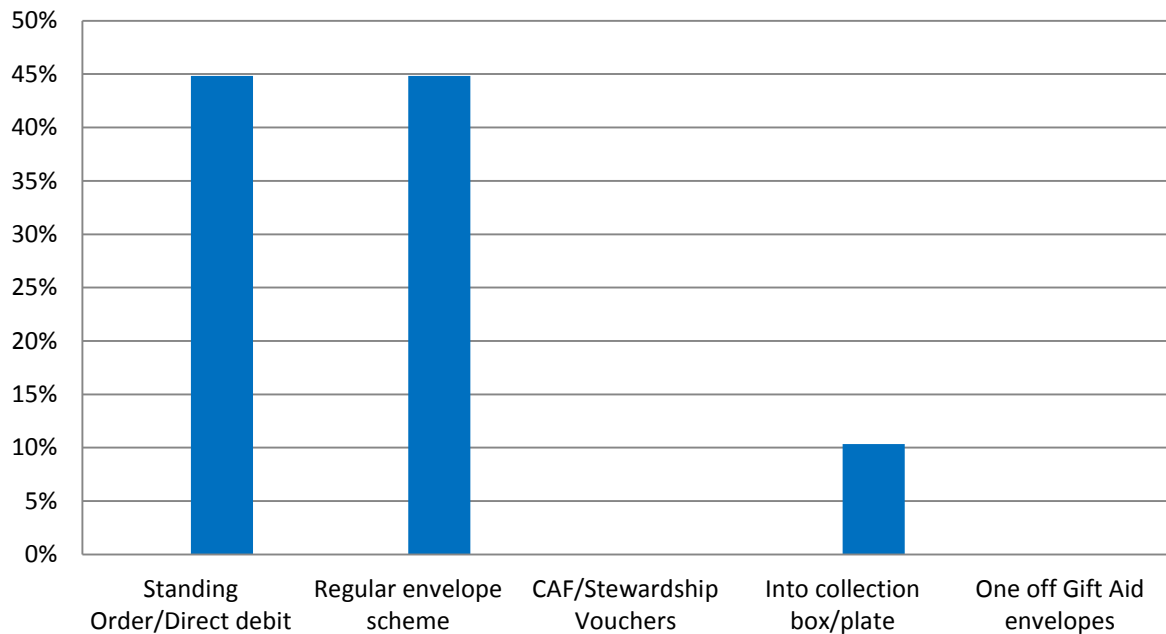
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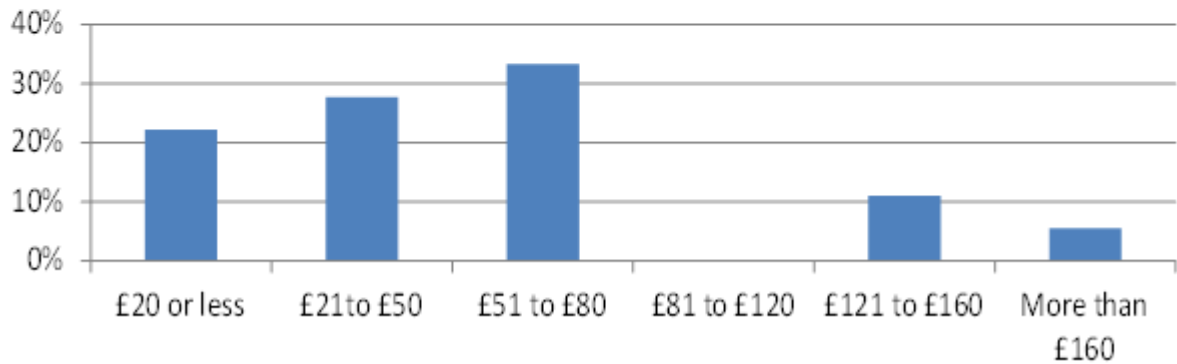
Q3 Which of the following apply to you?



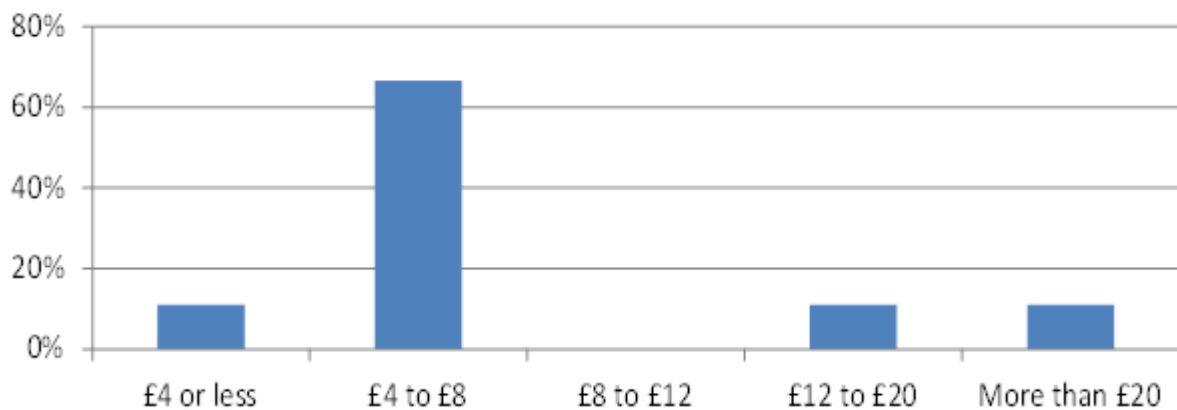
Q4 How do you give financially to your local church?



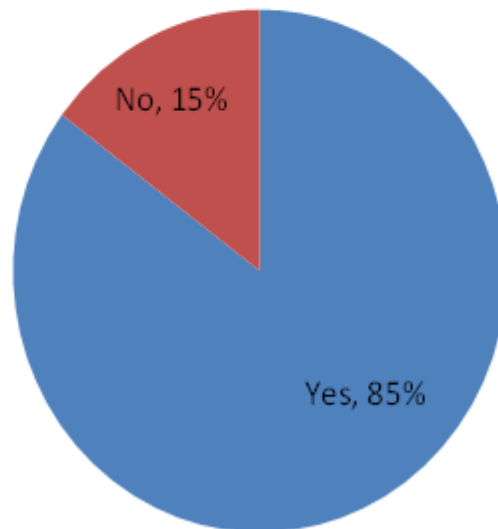
Q5 How much do you give to your local church? (monthly givers)



Q5 How much do you give to your local church? (weekly givers)



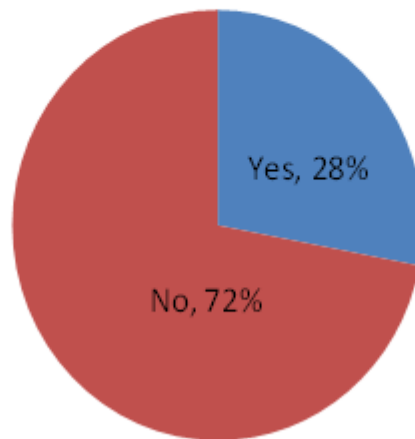
**Q6 Do you give to your local church
by Gift Aid?**



Q7 What proportion of your total church and charity giving would you say you give to your local church?

There were only 17 answers out of a potential 28 to this question giving an average of 58% and ranging from 50 to 90%.

Q8 Do you work out your giving in proportion to your income?

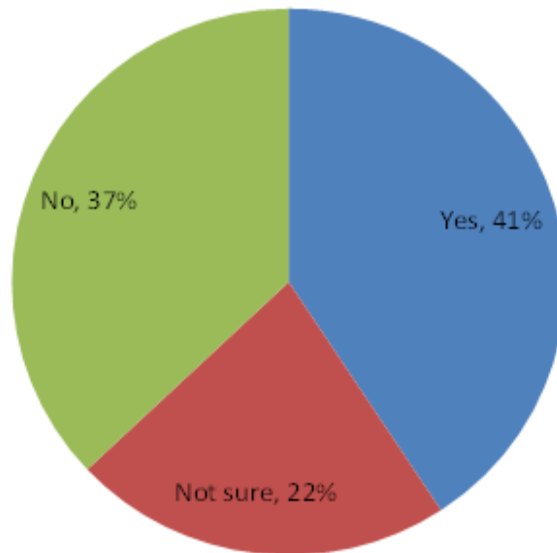


Q9 What proportion of your income do you give away to the church and charities combined?

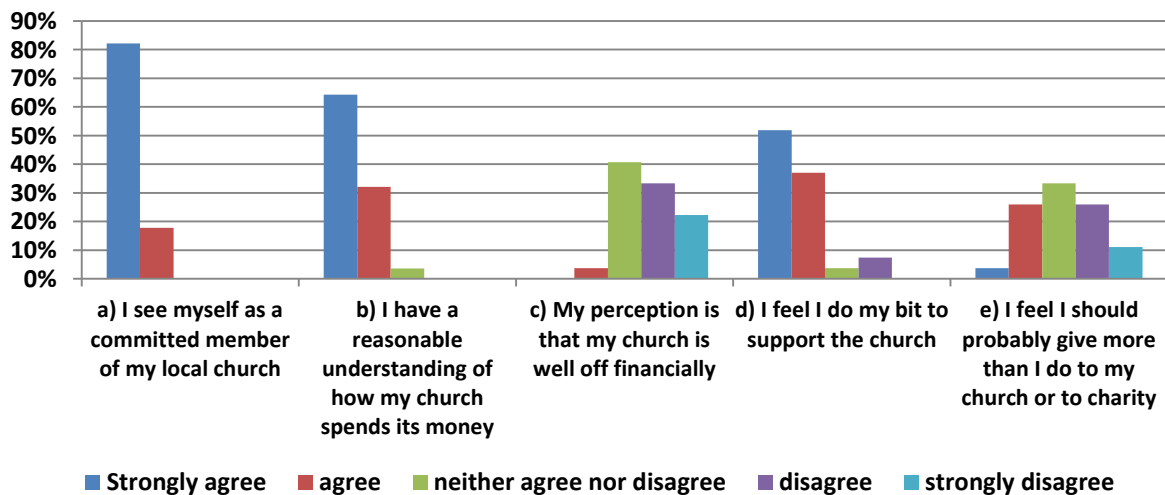
There were only 8 answers to this question out of a potential of 30.

The average of these was 5% with individual responses ranging from 3 to 10%

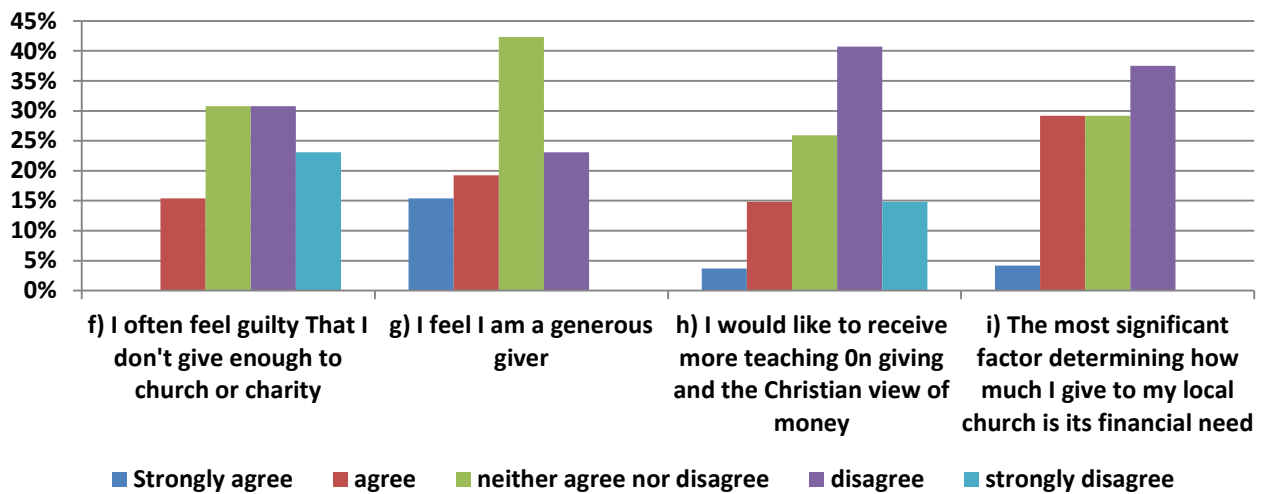
Q10. Do you think it reasonable that the church should challenge its members to give 5% of their after tax income to the church?



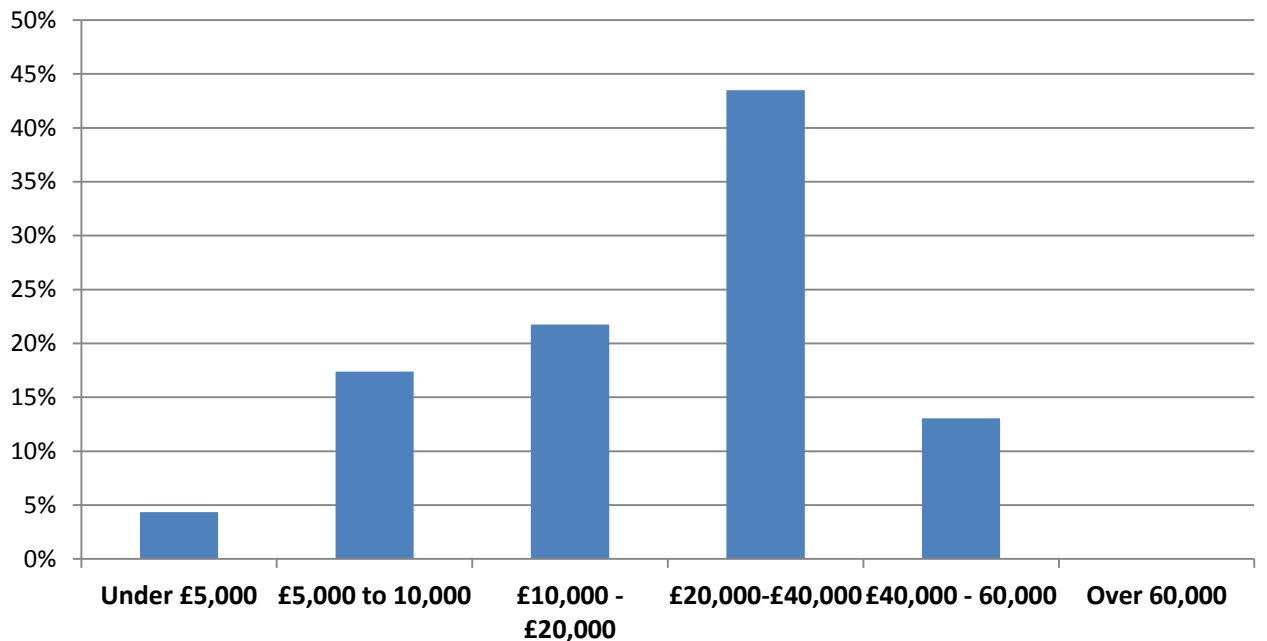
Q11a How strongly would you agree with the following statements?

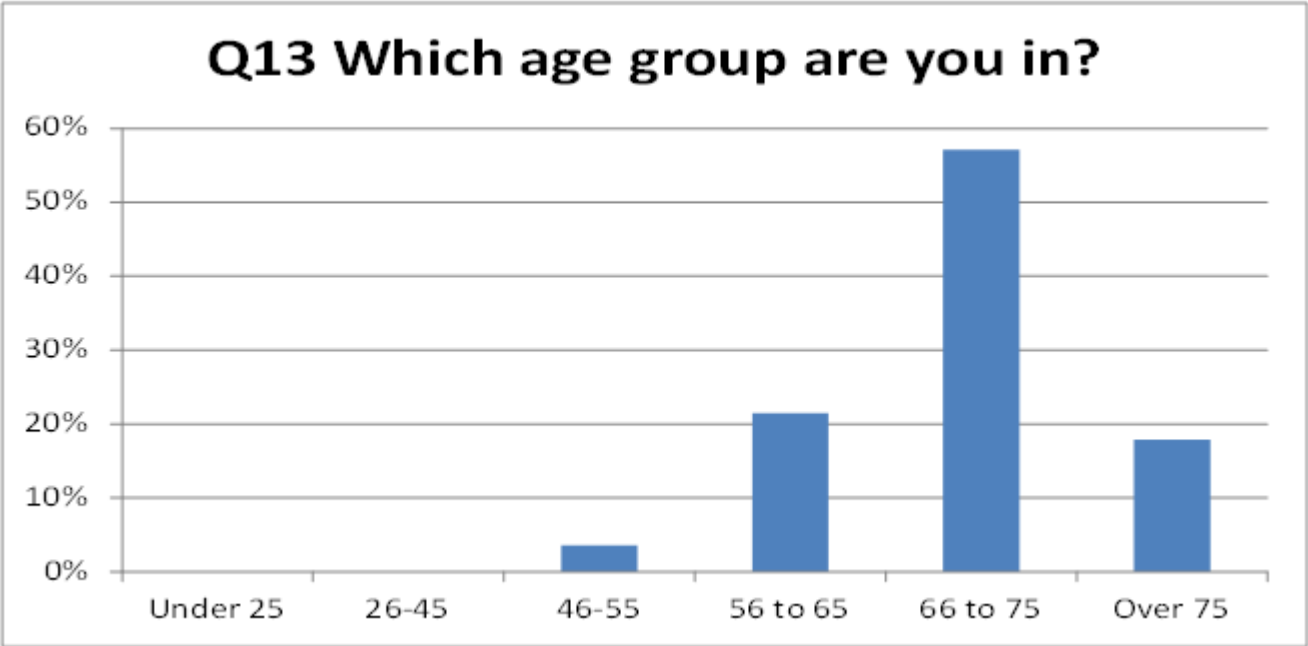


Q11b How strongly would you agree with the following statements?

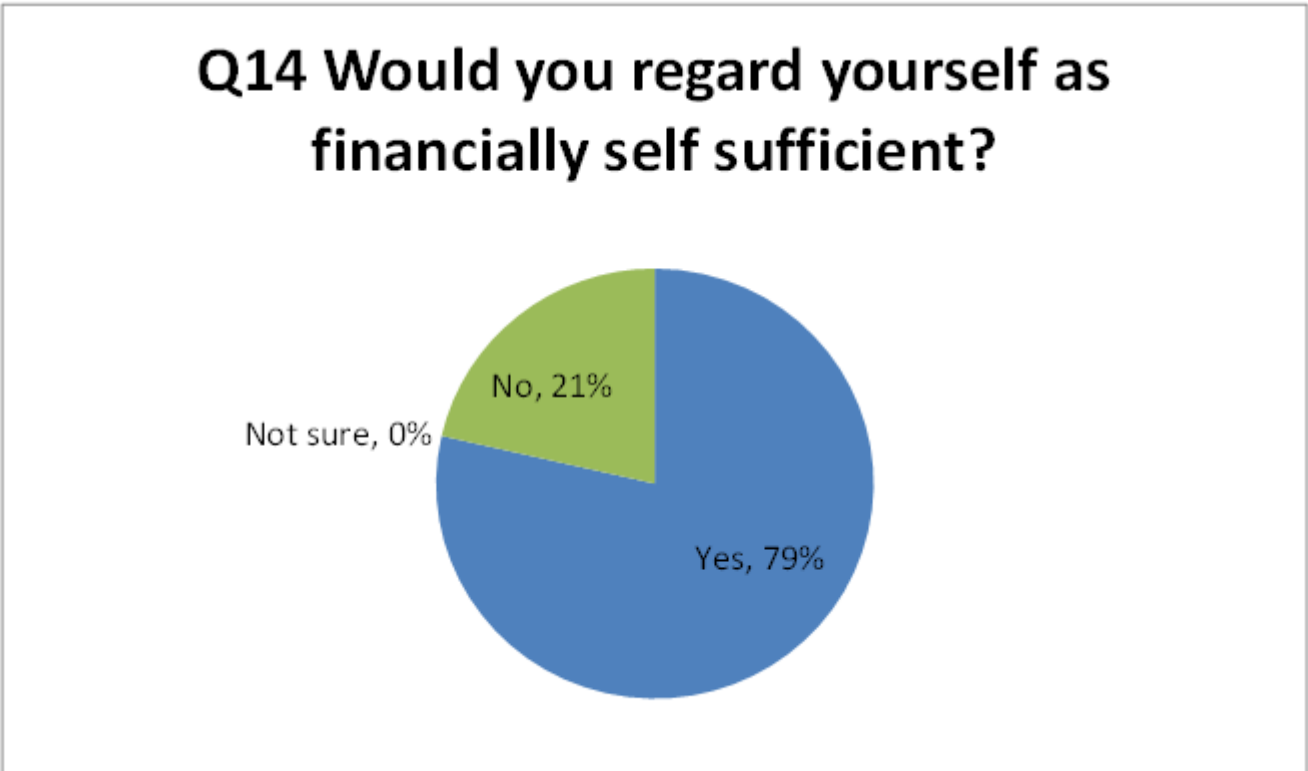


Q12 How would you describe your annual household income?





75% of respondents are over 66 years old



Q15 Do you have any who are financially dependent on your income?

